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his admirable qualities and achievements that make him an attractive hero, are made known. But as the volume is one of a series of "True stories of great Americans," it may be admitted that the failure to make the volume a more serious historical study is consistent with the intent of the book and does not interfere with the success of the author. It is a good story for boys, well told. No doubt more serious history could be taught to young readers than is attempted in this volume — by a more studied presentation of the significant aspects of Grant's life and its influence on American history, such as the cause for which Grant fought in the Mexican war, the surprise at Shiloh, Grant's quarrel with Johnson, and the political corruptions of Grant's administration. But such an attempt to teach history might interfere with the art of story-telling which is here well preserved and exemplified, and as there is nothing seriously misleading in the volume the lack of historical content in the book may well be over-looked. A strange slip occurs in stating the cost of the civil war as \$43,000,000 a day (p. 179), but barring this, so far as the reviewer has noticed, the book is free from historical misstatements. Its purpose, presenting a hero-story for the young, has been accomplished very creditably and the volume deserves high commendation as good reading for young people.

J. A. WOODBURN

Life of William McKinley. By Charles S. Olcott. In two volumes. (Boston and New York: Houghton Mifflin company, 1916. 400; 418 p. \$5.00 net)

This is an "official" biography of William McKinley and relates in a tone satisfactory to his intimates the obvious facts of his career, supplemented for the years of his presidency by extracts from the diaries of his secretary, George B. Cortelyou, and of his friend, Charles G. Dawes, and by information freely rendered by Judge William R. Day, his old associate. There is no evidence that its author, Mr. Olcott, was ever connected with McKinley, but he has fallen under the spell of that statesman's compelling personality. The nature of McKinley's death sealed the lips of most of his critics. Even Joseph B. Foraker, who had little reason to love him, is guarded in his criticisms in his recent frank autobiography. And the habit of McKinley as a politician was such that he left no letters or diaries of importance. Like his friend Hanna he did business by word of mouth, and his biographer bewails the fact that what letters there are too often end with the invitation "Won't you come and see me?" (1: xi). One cannot conceive of McKinley's keeping a diary in French, like Tom Reed; or unbosoming his innermost soul on paper to some friend, as John Hay so often did to Henry Adams; or appraising his own acts and motives in a journal like that of Hayes. There are

indeed more McKinley letters that give a glimpse of the real man in the Foraker autobiography than in the whole 800 pages of these two official volumes.

Because of the paucity of McKinley archive, and the unfailing laudatory trend of the sources, it is specially unfortunate that the biographer was not thoroughly grounded in the literature of American history for the last forty years. Mr. Croly, a well-informed and constructive critic, uncovered a real Hanna—a Hanna commanding the interest of his friends and compelling the respect of his opponents. But Mr. Olcott, working amid similar difficulties, has drawn only a lay figure, superlatively perfect, and exuding what was for twenty years stereotyped orthodoxy in the republican party.

McKinley is worth better and more realistic treatment than he has received. As Hanna was "the full flower of the spirit of commercialism in politics," so his friend was the perfect product of the give-and-take of tariff adjustment. Without frankness, ingenuity, and resilience the young man who entered congress in 1877 and deliberately took up the study of the tariff could never have risen in fourteen years (of which ten were in opposition), to the leadership of his political school. What Aldrich, after him, did through expert knowledge and intellectual force, McKinley did by political methods. No more characteristic story could be told than the one his biographer relates of certain of the highest rates of the McKinley bill. "Why did you ever consent to such high rates . . . ?" asked Mr. Herrick. "For the best reason in the world," promptly replied the president, "to get my bill passed." (1:127) Writer of the republican platform in 1884 and again in 1888, and chairman of the convention in 1892, McKinley's rise to party leadership was as reasonable and inevitable as that of any British prime minister, and was to an unusual degree free from the accident of party faction and due to real devotion to a principle.

It would be easy to challenge, and perhaps to disprove, many of Mr. Olcott's tranquil generalizations: that the election of 1888 gave the republicans "an unmistakable commission" to frame a protective tariff (1:158); that the landslide of 1890 was the work of the "calamity howler" (1:181); that the panic of 1893 came because "it was enough for the people to know that the party of Free-Trade was in the saddle. . . ." (1:295); that McKinley's attitude on the gold standard was "unmistakably sound" (1:311); or that the civil service law of 1883 had by 1897 "completely overthrown the spoils system. . . ." (1:342). But it is of more value to indicate the numerous distinct contributions that Mr. Olcott has made: he gives excellent maps of the Ohio gerrymanders made against McKinley in his Stark county district

(1:82); new light is thrown upon the authorship of the republican gold plank in 1896 (1:314); there are new facts upon the appointment of John Sherman as secretary of state (1:329), upon the peace negotiations after the Spanish war (2:63), and the nomination of Roosevelt as vice president in 1900 (2:268). In the last case, as in other instances in which he mentions him, Mr. Olcott is lukewarm if not unfriendly to Colonel Roosevelt. He tells the story of the fight at Santiago without naming Schley.

Mr. Olcott's book will doubtless long have vogue as the completest collection of McKinley facts and as the expression of what conservative republicanism of 1916 thought of its course a generation earlier, but it falls below the high excellence of the recent works on Hayes, Hay, Hanna, Foraker, and Taft.

FREDERIC L. PAXSON

Western North Carolina. A history (from 1730-1913). By John Preston Arthur. (Raleigh, North Carolina: Edward Buncombe chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution, Asheville, North Carolina, 1914. 709 p. \$2.50)

Each of the twenty-eight chapters of this book abounds in recollections and observations of a man of wide experience, abundant humor, fine intellect, and ardent patriotism. It contains, also, the recollections of many of the author's friends and neighbors, some of which are here presented for the first time. Intermixed with all are the traditions of a land rich in natural beauty and in stories of daring and adventure. Though not always conforming to scientific methods of analysis and presentation, the book is interesting and has a local touch and color that make it very much worth while. Though giving much of interest regarding the neighboring counties, this book deals mainly with the history of Buncombe county, made famous long ago by Mr. Felix Walker's speech in congress on the admission of Missouri. To the demand of his colleagues for a vote, he asked to be indulged while he spoke "only for Buncombe," and thus the name of that county was made a synonym for "demagoguery" and show, and the English language was enriched by a most expressive word.

Following an introductory one, there are nine chapters dealing with the boundaries, colonial days, Daniel Boone, the state of Franklin, grants and litigation, county history, pioneer preachers, and roads, stage coaches, and taverns, respectively. Like the remaining chapters of the book these are too fragmentary to be as helpful as they might otherwise have been. Nevertheless, most of them contain useful and certainly interesting information. The adventures of pioneers and their efforts to form free governments, as seen in the Watauga association, are always interesting.